

NOT UNTO HIMSELF ALONE

An Address

*Delivered by A. J. McPhail
President of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool
at the Co-operative Rally, Carlyle Lake, Saskatchewan
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"When Mr. McKay and Mr. Thompson first told me of the proposal to establish a memorial in the form of a fund to carry on co-operative education in memory of one, who, in life, not only believed in the principles and ideals of co-operation, but practised them, I thought the idea fine indeed and in keeping with the true spirit of co-operation. It seems that very rarely is a man's real worth fully appreciated until he can no longer enjoy the appreciation. I did not have the privilege of knowing Mr. Tarbat, but I understand he was one of those men who was interested in the welfare of his fellows and in making the community a better place in which to live; one who performed his daily tasks in the public interest without thought of special recognition or reward. There are many such men and women whose unselfish and disinterested work is making progress in the larger fields of co-operative enterprise possible. It is not, and cannot be, given to many to serve in such a manner as to attract widespread attention. Further, desire for personal notice and reward is not the kind of service which makes possible great forward movements in the interest of the people; rather, it is the work which is carried on by men and women, here and there, who, without too much thought of personal reward, give heart and life to these movements. It is fitting, then, that the first and only move of this kind that I know of in Saskatchewan, should be in memory of one of those men whose work in life was not less significant and valuable because he was not widely known. It is more truly appropriate because we are paying tribute to the life work of one who is typical of a large number of men and women scattered all over this country; men and women whose unselfishness and vision have made all our co-operative achievement possible. I can think

of nothing more worthy of commemoration than the life of a quiet, thoughtful, unselfish, willing worker, man or woman; one who goes about the daily routine tasks cheerfully and uncomplainingly, doing well what their hands find to do.

SHADOWS AND SUNLIGHT

I have spent most of my life on the land and I know something of the long hours of hard work. I know something of the hopes and the disappointments of people who must work to live; of the hope that one day they will not have to work so hard—that one day they may be able to enjoy some leisure and some of the good things of life. The years slip quietly by and most of the hopes of early life go with them, and sometimes bitterness or despair replaces hope. But it is not always so. With many, patience and fortitude take the place of youthful hope and optimism. Such as these are the hope of civilization.

We speak of the romance of war, of the Crusades, of daring deeds on land and sea and air, but what of the romance of quiet, plain, ordinary men and women facing anew each day the perplexing, and so often discouraging problems of life and living; men and women with no prospect of better things to come, with no prospect of relief from the haunting fear of poverty in old age, yet who go bravely on, facing each day with patience and courage?

What greater adventure, what greater romance can any one seek than to help, be it in ever so humble a way, to bring more hope and sunshine into the lives of those about us? To bring about a state of affairs where, in reality, all shall have equality of opportunity, where poverty will be unknown, where life for each individual can be lived in fuller measure.

CO-OPERATION AND PEACE

Because of the development and growth of the co-operative movement, we have today new hope. Co-operation is all-embracing in its influences. It covers the whole gamut of human relationships. Not so long ago the statement "competition is the life of trade" was generally accepted. Today it is challenged everywhere. Not so long ago men settled their differences with the sword or pistol. If they attempt to do so today they find themselves under lock and key like wild animals. We are not far removed from the time when our ancestors lived in small groups called tribes or clans, each continually, or often at war with the other. We now look on those days as the days of barbarism. Only a few years ago the great nations of the earth were literally at each other's throats for four long years. Millions of innocent men were slaughtered. From an unbiased examination of the internal conditions of the nations today, it would be difficult to decide who won the war. We are told that if another war comes, the last struggle will seem insignificant in comparison. Co-operation, and co-operation only, will avert another war by creating conditions which would make war unthinkable. The League of Nations itself is designed to aid the various member nations to co-operate in finding ways and means of settling disputes by peaceful means. Since the new Labor government has come into office in the United Kingdom, Ramsay MacDonald has startled and pleased the world by making it known that he proposes to follow a more direct method of co-operation, and visit the United States capitol himself for that purpose. The old methods of diplomacy and of settling disputes will soon be as out-of-date and behind the times as duels between individuals. Co-operation, negotiation and persuasion will be the all powerful weapons of the future.

THE BASIS OF HOPE

But in order to be sure that good will and common sense will replace the old idea of domination by force of might, in the national and international spheres, it is essential that individuals and classes learn to live with each other in accordance with the principles of co-operation as they have governed the larger affairs of the world. Co-operation like charity begins at home. The real basis of hope for better days to come is the widespread "yes," the world-wide acceptance in one form or another of the principles of co-operation as the greatest hope for human progress. Each day a larger and larger num-

ber of men and women awaken to the full significance of the truth that no man can live unto himself. As a result of the increasing complexity of our modern civilization the indisputable nature of this truth becomes more and more apparent. There are still those, even in this young country, where progress is second nature, who have not awakened. Let us not become impatient even with these backward members of society. They simply do not understand. They have not yet caught the vision of things as they might and can be. Co-operation is a growth and a way of living.

Up to date, it is doubtful if all the people in any community or in any country have ever agreed on any one question. Such a condition was impossible under the competitive system, where coercion reigned supreme, and might was right. "Divide and conquer" always was, and always will be, the slogan of the competitive system. On the other hand, the very foundation of co-operation is unity based on friendliness, good will and mutual benefit. Surely we may look confidently forward to some day having complete unity among all our people, and all peoples in practical support of such a philosophy of living.

THESE LASTING QUALITIES

If some day we are to have a more ideal state, that state must first live in the minds and hearts of individual men and women. We can talk of changing present conditions by legal enactments, but if there is to be permanent change for good the change must first take place in the minds of men and women. Co-operation is a practical as well as an ideal way of life. All great movements of the people must have something that will appeal to the imagination of the people. The prospect of greater financial returns alone is not enough. Unselfishness, the spirit of sacrifice, the spirit of fair play, of "do unto others as you would that they should do unto you," of kindness—these qualities make a great and lasting appeal to the hearts and imaginations of men. Co-operation in its best and truest sense stands for all these.

Who would think of commemorating the life of the most successful man in the southeastern part of Saskatchewan, successful in the ordinary, every day meaning of that term. The late George Tarbat provides a good example of what I am trying to express. Judged by the ordinary standards of success he was not outstanding. I have no

doubt many men here could have bought his worldly possessions many times over. Yet his quiet, kindly, useful life has made an appeal to the hearts and imagination of the people of this section of the country. They sense that he had something which, if grasped and understood, and practised by men generally, will quickly transform the world. All men who have really left their impress for good on their community, or in the wider world of affairs, have had it. The great secret after all is very simple—too simple for many to understand or comprehend—"Forget self!" "He that seeketh his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life shall find it." I am not quoting this because it is in the Bible, although I would make no apology for that. I am quoting it simply because it is literally true.

Neither men or women can grow to their full stature, reach the full measure of their powers for good, unless they forget self. We so often hear men speak of the welfare of the country and loyalty to one's country, of the necessity of developing our country, or our city, or our community. Too often the most selfish kind of self-interest is hidden behind a cloak of mere words. The only kind of loyalty to, or interest in one's country, which is anything more than sham and hypocrisy, is that loyalty and interest in the general well-being of men and women. The rapid development of the resources of a country in the interests of a few wealthy manipulators or promoters is one of the most rabid forms of this hypocrisy. There are many others.

Men and women are the only real assets of any country. All other resources are worthless unless there are men and women to use them. The possession of all the wealth of Canada would be of no value to one or two individuals unless there were a larger number of other individuals who wanted and needed a part of his wealth. Again, unless men and women have a real interest in the welfare of those about them, and are willing to serve, and let recognition or reward take care of itself, all their talk about loyalty and the welfare of the country is empty prattle.

CO-OPERATION PRACTICAL

Co-operation is a combination of the practical and the ideal. It offers ample scope for putting into practice the ideas of the practical man as well as the ideals of the idealist. It is not only the most efficient, economical and practical

way of doing business but when carried to its ultimate conclusion, it recognizes equality and the interdependence of all human beings. It provides a business medium through which progressive and socially minded men and women, with high ideals can find satisfaction and peace of mind in useful work. It is revolutionary in that it aims to bring about a more equitable distribution of wealth by returning to its members as nearly as possible the full value of the product of their labor.

It seeks to extend its influence and gain adherents by the all-powerful permeating influence of friendliness, persuasion and good will. It is the direct antithesis of the competitive system which is responsible for our present chaotic condition, and our present criminal inequality in the distribution of the good things of life, where one man has more than enough for 10,000 men, with many times 10,000 starving or on the verge of starvation. The most effective weapon of competition is coercion and compulsion. The wonder of the modern world is the rapidity with which co-operation and all it stands for, is quietly, peacefully and quickly spreading its influence in every community and in every land under the sun. It is as the sun, sending its warm and healing rays wherever there is trouble and inequality among men. Its ultimate result, if given freedom of action, will be to quietly, peacefully and effectively displace the old ruthless, coercive, competitive system, which has brought so much suffering to mankind.

I like to think that this verse in some measure expresses the spirit of co-operation:

"Not mine the arrogant and selfish claim
To all good things; be mine the lowly aim,
To seek and find, to know and comprehend,
And wisdom-ward all holy footsteps wend;
Nothing is mine to claim or to command,
But all is mine to know and understand."

I am sure George Tarbat must have been guided by some such ideal of life. If, as co-operators, we too can cultivate in some measure the qualities of mind and heart which this verse so well expresses, it will bring to each of us serenity and peace of mind and result in strength and power to the co-operative movement